



City of Grass Valley  
City Council  
Agenda Action Sheet

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**Title:** Nevada County Boundary Drop Response Plan

**CEQA:** Not a Project

**Recommendation:** That Council 1) approve the Fire Chief to enter into the agreement, subject to legal review, and 2) Direct staff to provide updates on progress and outcomes during a six-month evaluation period.

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**Prepared by:** Mark Buttron-Fire Chief

**Council Meeting Date:** 03/11/2025

**Date Prepared:** 03/03/2025

**Agenda:** Consent

**Background Information:** The Fire Service has a proud tradition of mutual assistance, recognizing that no single agency can manage all emergencies independently. In western Nevada County, this principle is exemplified through longstanding partnerships that ensure a united front during large-scale or simultaneous incidents. For over 20 years, Grass Valley and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District have demonstrated the power of collaboration through their Joint Operations Agreement (JOA). Among its many benefits, the boundary drop stands out as a pivotal feature.

A boundary drop enables the closest available resources to respond to emergencies, regardless of jurisdiction. This ensures that response decisions are based on proximity, call type, and resource availability rather than agency boundaries. Within the JOA, this approach has consistently delivered prompt and organized emergency responses while strategically maintaining coverage in critical areas, safeguarding public safety.

Beyond the JOA, the City has established automatic aid agreements with other fire agencies in the County and participates in the Mutual Threat Zone Agreement with CAL FIRE. This agreement grants access to extensive resources, including aircraft, engines, bulldozers, and hand crews, for vegetation fires within city limits.

The City's geographic position at the "hub" of Nevada County uniquely equips it to provide rapid support to partner agencies. This capability not only mitigates emergencies but also reduces risks within City limits. Both City and County fire agencies have reaped the rewards of these agreements, particularly during major incidents such as the McCourtney Fire, Bennett Fire, River Fire, Everhart Fire, and Sierra Motor Sports Fire. These events tested system capacities, underscoring the value of mutual assistance and collaborative effort.

In alignment with these principles, the City has recently engaged in discussions with the County of Nevada to secure fiscal assistance for the startup and integration of Tablet Command. Under the proposed agreement, the City will cover the initial expenses, with the County reimbursing these costs. The County has expressed overwhelming support for this initiative, recognizing the enhanced emergency response capabilities that Tablet Command offers.

Tablet Command integrates with the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system operated by CAL FIRE's Grass Valley Emergency Command Center (ECC). Its features include:

**Global Situational Awareness:** Provides a shared operational picture for all responders in Nevada County.

**Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL):** Enables dispatchers to monitor emergency equipment in real time. CAD automatically assigns the closest resource to an incident, improving response times and efficiency.

Building on this foundation, the proposed County Boundary Drop Agreement seeks to extend the principles of the JOA to include all fire agencies in Nevada County. This agreement will incorporate a move-up and cover plan managed through the Grass Valley ECC, strategically positioning resources during large-scale or simultaneous incidents.

Formalizing this approach will establish a unified standard for coordinated fire response, enhancing firefighter and public safety, improving resource allocation, and managing incidents with greater efficiency. The County Boundary Drop Agreement promises to strengthen emergency services for the entire community, ensuring a safer and more resilient Nevada County.

Staff recommends the City Fire Department participate in the six month evaluation period and provide regular progress summary updates.

**Council Goals/Objectives:** Exceptional Public Safety consistent with the City of Grass Valley Strategic Plan

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Funds Available:** N/A

**Account #:**

**Reviewed by:**

**Attachments:** Response Plan